



"An Eye on Your Economy" highlights the U.S. Census Bureau's data collection activities, for the manufacturing, mining, and construction sectors of our economy. We hope you find the articles and information useful and look forward to suggestions on ways to increase its value in the future.

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Survey of Construction Microdata File Provides Insight Into Housing Industry

by Raemeka Gant

Many companies and organizations want to cross-tabulate information on specific design components of new homes. An example of this would be brick homes with a sales price greater than \$200,000 that have three or more bathrooms in the Middle Atlantic area. Comparable, but not as in-depth, information is published annually in the publication *The Characteristics of New Housing* by the United States and four census regions. This publication provides information for specific characteristics and is not available by the nine census divisions. A request for a special cross-tabulation similar to the example mentioned can be provided for a fee. However, the Manufacturing and Construction Division developed the Survey of Construction (SOC) microdata file for customers who wish to compute their own specialized cross-tabulations.

Originally created several years ago, this file was recently revised because of changes in the SOC estimation methodology. The SOC microdata file contains:

- All homes started, completed, and/or sold in a given year.

- More than 30,000 observations in the Survey of Construction.
- More than 40 physical and financial characteristics corresponding to each observation such as the sales price, the number of bedrooms, bathrooms, fireplaces, etc.

Released annually, the file contains data for the previous year; it also has some historic data. For a nominal fee of \$50 per year, the file can be purchased in one of two formats: Microsoft Excel or SAS 8.2.

For more information regarding the SOC microdata file, please visit our Web site at www.census.gov/const/www/index.html or call 301-763-5160.

Glassware Industry Shows Major Signs of Downturn

by Theresa Crowley

Glassware, ranging from tableware to television parts to lens blanks, took a major downward turn in 2001. Based on the 2001 Current Industrial Report, MA327E, *Consumer, Scientific, Technical, and Industrial Glassware*, the total shipments of glassware decreased by 13.1 percent, to \$5.1 billion from the \$5.9 billion reported in 2000 and are at the lowest level since 1996.



Table, kitchen, art, and novelty glassware products, included in NAICS 327212 and 327215, were hit hard. The total shipments in this category declined 9.5 percent, to \$1.8 billion from \$2 billion reported in 2000. Tableware and stemware are two

products in this category, which were affected by low demand. Tableware declined 13.5 percent to \$257.9 million from the \$298.1 million reported in 2000. Stemware declined 15.3 percent to \$167.8 million from the \$198.2 million reported in 2000. A continuing problem facing these products is foreign competition. The percentage of imports to apparent consumption increased from 41.4 percent in 2000 to 42.2 percent in 2001.

Often considered a luxury item, glassware recently has seen a decrease in demand with the drop in the economy. Items such as television sets, which include glassware products as parts, have seen declines in sales. Television tube blanks and parts, included in NAICS 327212 and 327215, decreased 20.3 percent, to \$739.6 million from the 2000 shipments of \$928.1 million. To combat this sales decline, manufacturers are turning to higher technology and large, high-definition television sets.

Glassware manufacturers are hoping for an increase in demand, but until then many have had to eliminate jobs to reduce costs in order to stay in business.

To view annual data on our Web site for glassware, go to www.census.gov/mcd/327/ma327e.html or www.census.gov/mcd/asmhome.html.

Timely Manufacturing Statistics

by Dan Sansbury

In November 2003, new orders were placed with manufacturers totaling \$336.9 billion. Of that total, \$53.9 billion was ordered for transportation equipment.



These statistics, along with data on shipments, inventories, and unfilled orders are available monthly from the Manufacturers' Shipments,

Inventories, and Orders survey, otherwise known as the "M3" survey. While many data users are anxiously awaiting the detailed manufacturing data available from the 2002 Economic Census, the M3 survey continues to provide monthly estimates of manufacturing activity in the United States.

This is accomplished by collecting data on a monthly basis from approximately 4,000 of the largest manufacturing companies in the United States. Thanks to their cooperation and quick response to the M3 survey, MCD is able to produce advance estimates of monthly manufacturing activity 18 workdays after the survey month.

These data are available on the Web site: www.census.gov/m3. Historic data are available in ASCII or Excel format back to 1992 on a NAICS basis. Data prior to 1992 are also available, but only on an SIC basis. The most recent addition to the Web site is a new archive of printed press releases and reports back to 1992.

Pharmaceutical: A Robust Industry

by Tony Blanco



In the midst of a timid manufacturing industry, the "well-medicated" pharmaceutical industry is still very healthy. In 2001, this industry had a phenomenal increase in production of 14.4 percent. The value of shipments that year totaled \$90.7 billion compared with \$79.3 billion in 2000.

Among the nine pharmaceutical product categories that we collect data on, the central nervous system area showed the largest value of shipments. This category includes tranquilizers and psychotherapeutic and antidepressant agents. On the financial side, the pharmaceutical companies that manufacture these products had nothing to be depressed about. They shipped \$19.7 billion worth of products in 2001 which was an increase of 6.6 percent over 2000.

Output paralleled the high demand for these pharmaceutical products. As Americans became better informed, they demanded more sophisticated products. Now patients tell their doctor the prescription they want based on the information they get from the drug commercials on television.

The future for the pharmaceutical industry looks even brighter as the "baby boomer" generation grows older, and consequently its need for prescribed medications increases. According to industry experts, Americans are the largest pharmaceutical consumers in the world. For the pharmaceutical companies that's "money in the bank." As more prescription drugs come on the market each year, the American consumer's perceived need for these new drugs is expected to continue to increase.

Home Remodeling Research

by Tamara Cole

A new paper titled *Research into the Differences in Home Remodeling Data* examines the relationship between Census Bureau's quarterly C50 report (*Expenditures for Residential Improvements and Repairs*) and its American Housing Survey (AHS).

Both surveys collect, among other items, data on remodeling work done by homeowners. In 2001, their estimates of nationwide expenditures for homeowner remodeling differed by about \$40 billion, the AHS reporting significantly higher remodeling expenditures than the C50.

This paper details and, when possible, quantifies the survey differences. Based on this research, several new data items will be added to the C50 survey that will reduce the difference by nearly half. The new data items include the purchase of kitchen appliances, remodeling work done in manufactured houses, and installing wall-to-wall carpeting. The Census Bureau will begin to collect the new data items in January 2004.



The complete paper is available online at www.census.gov/mcd.

The Newsprint Industry—Losing the Paper Trail

by Tracy K. Palmer

The surge of information technology has catapulted us into an age where virtual information reigns. Today's information seekers no longer need to peruse the morning or afternoon paper; they now have the convenience of accessing their local newspaper from their

personal computer screen. Even libraries and businesses are now converting paper documents to microfilm or electronic files. Old newspapers and magazines take up too much space. The convenience of turning on the computer and logging onto a favorite Web site or information portal is now many people's first choice. But is virtual information the same as the real thing? How are the newsprint and paper mill industries affected by this sudden surge in information technology?



The newsprint mill industry (NAICS 322122) primarily includes manufacturers of newsprint and uncoated ground wood paper from pulp. In recent years, the newsprint industry has projected a steady decline. In the 2001 Annual Survey of Manufactures (ASM), the value of newsprint shipments decreased 9 percent to \$4.2 billion from the 2000 value of shipments of \$4.7 billion. Total employment in 2001, was 9.7 thousand, a decrease of 6 percent from the 2000 total employment of 10.3 thousand. In addition, the cost of materials was the lowest in 4 years, from \$2.7 billion in 1998 to \$2.1 billion in 2001.

Comparable to the newsprint industry, the paper mill industry (NAICS 322121), which excludes newsprint, also projected a steady decline. The 2001 value of shipments decreased 7 percent to \$42.6 billion from the 2000 value of shipments of \$46.1 billion. Total employment in 2001, was 105.0 thousand, a decrease of 5 percent compared with the 2000 employment of 110.7 thousand.

For more information regarding the paper industry and the ASM, visit our Web site at www.census.gov/mcd.

It All Starts Here...



George A. Roff, Jr.

*Assistant Division Chief for
Construction Indicator Programs
(Retired January 2004)*



MANUFACTURING, MINING, AND CONSTRUCTION STATISTICS

It All Starts Here!

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

A noted economist once wrote, "Construction shapes the space in which we will live in the future." During the past few years, construction activity—especially residential construction—has been the exceptional bright light in an otherwise dismal U.S. economy. And how do we know that? The current construction programs area of the Manufacturing and Construction Division (MCD) produce a wide variety of surveys and data series designed to monitor the construction sector of the economy on a monthly and quarterly basis.

We provide monthly estimates of residential building permits—a leading economic indicator; monthly housing starts, completions, and new home sales—all critical indicators of the housing economy; monthly estimates

of the value of construction put in place—a key indicator of the health of the entire construction economy used by the Bureau of Economic Analysis for direct input to GDP; monthly estimates of manufactured home placements, inventories, and average sale prices; quarterly estimates of residential improvements and repairs; and quarterly price indices for single family homes. These data are used by economic analysts, building materials suppliers and manufacturers, and trade associations to assess the entire construction industry and develop forecasts of future construction activity. Government analysts at the Treasury Department, Federal Reserve Board, and Council of Economic Advisers track the various series to evaluate economic policy.

Information Services Center

Services Provided:

- Subscription for the Current Industrial Reports (CIRs)
- Custom data extractions from economic census CD-ROMs

Contact Us:

U.S. Census Bureau
Manufacturing and
Construction Division
4700 Silver Hill Road
Room 2108, FOB-4
Washington, DC 20233-6900

Phone: 301-763-4673
Fax: 301-457-4632
E-mail: mcdinfo@census.gov
Visit us on the Web at:
www.census.gov/mcd

Did You Know...

- A manufacturer of industrial chemicals used data on production of semiconductors and other high technology products to assess the feasibility of introducing a line of advanced composite materials.
- A major food store chain uses economic census data and population figures to estimate potential weekly food store sales in the trade area of each of its stores. These estimates allow the company to calculate market share for each existing store and to evaluate prospective sites for new stores.
- A professor at Harvard University studied a series of votes in Congress related to free trade issues. He used economic census data on

manufacturing to explore the correlation between each state's industrial structure and the way that state's congressional representatives voted on these issues.

- Federal and state agencies look to economic census data to gauge the effectiveness of programs such as minority contracting guidelines, trade policies, and job retraining.

To read more on how businesses use economic census data, visit our Web site at: www.census.gov/epcd/ec02/uses.html

View the 2002 Economic Census release schedule at: www.census.gov/epcd/ec02/go2sch3.html

Manufacturing and Construction Division Programs

- Economic Census: Manufacturing Sector, Mining Sector, and Construction Sector
- Construction Statistics Indicator Programs
- Manufacturers' Shipments, Inventories, and Orders (M3)
- Annual Survey of Manufactures (ASM)
- Current Industrial Reports (CIR)
- Special Study Surveys: Pollution Abatement, Plant Capacity, and Research and Development